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First report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 2001 (2011), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every four months on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the first submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since my third report pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1936 (2010) (S/2011/435) of 7 July 2011. It covers key political developments and regional and international events as well as operational and security matters concerning Iraq.

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Political developments

3. Since July 2011, political blocs have continued negotiations, although inconclusively, on a number of outstanding political issues, including the appointment of the heads of the three security-related ministries, namely the Ministers of Defence, the Interior and National Security (although Sadoun al-Dulaimi was appointed Acting Minister of Defence on 16 August). Discussions also continued on the establishment of the proposed National Council for Strategic Policies, which was envisaged as part of the agreement reached in Erbil in November 2010 that led to the formation of the current Government. Officials of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government started negotiations on pending issues between them, including the draft oil and gas law and the implementation of measures agreed upon during the government-formation process.

4. On 30 July, the Council of Representatives approved Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's proposal to reduce the size of his cabinet by cutting 12 posts of Ministers of State. The Prime Minister had proposed this measure in response to demands made earlier during public demonstrations calling for reform and improvement in the delivery of services. In the next phase, the Prime Minister is

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expected to propose the merging of ministries with similar functions. Meanwhile, during the reporting period, smaller demonstrations took place in various cities focusing on jobs, better provision of services and an end to perceived corruption.

5. On 2 August, President Jalal Talabani hosted a meeting of leaders of political blocs to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Erbil agreement. As part of the agreement, the leaders had requested the Presidency to present a draft law to the Council of Representatives on the establishment of the National Council for Strategic Policies. The draft law had been presented and had been read at the Council of Representatives for the first time on 11 August, but it remains to be enacted owing to the lack of a consensus among the political blocs on the composition and mandate of the National Council.

6. On 7 August, the Minister of Electricity, Raad al-Shalal, resigned after alleged irregularities in the Ministry involving foreign contractors. On 10 October, the Council of Representatives endorsed the Prime Minister's nomination of Abdul Karim Aftan al-Jumailias the new Minister for Electricity.

7. The United States Forces in Iraq continued their planned drawdown with the intention of completing it, in accordance with the status-of-forces agreement, by 31 December 2011. At the meeting hosted by President Talabani on 2 August, leaders of political blocs agreed to request the Government to start negotiations with the United States of America on the possible presence of United States military trainers beyond the end of the year. This was followed by inconclusive negotiations between the Governments of the United States and Iraq on the number, mandate and immunity of such trainers. On 21 October, President Barack Obama announced that all United States troops in Iraq stationed under the status-of-forces agreement would leave Iraq by year's end, as planned.

8. Following the withdrawal of the United States Forces in Iraq from Diyala governorate on 15 August, an additional brigade of Kurdish Peshmerga forces was deployed to the area. The arrival of those forces, which are normally supervised jointly by the Iraqi security forces, Kurdish troops and the United States Forces in Iraq, resulted in some tension. Within days, a senior working group of the combined security mechanism, consisting of representatives of the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the United States Forces in Iraq, discussed the issue and worked to stabilize the situation. Arrangements for the combined security mechanism in the disputed internal territories of Iraq after the withdrawal of the United States Forces in Iraq has been completed remain to be defined.

9. On 11 October, Prime Minister Al-Maliki requested local authorities in the Khanaqin District to remove the flag of the Kurdistan Regional Government from their administrative buildings. The local District Administrator refused to remove the flag, noting that it had been there since the fall of the former regime in 2003. The Kurdistan Regional Government supported the position of the District Administrator and demonstrations were held to protest the Prime Minister's request. Many residents of Khanaqin raised the Kurdistan Regional Government's flag on the rooftops of their houses. The issue remains unresolved.

10. From 4 to 7 October, a delegation representing the Kurdistan Regional Government visited Baghdad to discuss outstanding issues with the Government of Iraq. Among other matters, they discussed the draft oil and gas law that the Government had submitted to the Council of Representatives on 28 August.

Differences remain over provisions in the draft law that relate to the structure of the proposed federal oil and gas council and its powers over the oil and gas sector. Following the delegation's visit, officials of the Kurdistan Regional Government stated that a new draft agreeable to both parties would be submitted to the Council of Representatives by December 2011. Other issues discussed related to the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution, the budget for Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the implementation of the Erbil agreement. The discussions concluded with an agreement to form joint committees to look into the issues pending between the two sides.

11. In the Kurdistan region, since 11 July, ruling and opposition parties have suspended negotiations on reforms mainly because of demands from opposition parties (Goran, the Kurdish Islamic Union and the Kurdish Islamic Group) to create an environment conducive to dialogue prior to the actual negotiations. As in the previous reporting period, public demonstrations took place in the Kurdish region to call for governance reforms. To address these concerns and to restart dialogue, on 27 August the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Massoud Barzani, issued four decrees releasing funding for political parties that plan to participate in the forthcoming provincial elections and authorizing the establishment of a ministerial committee to investigate cases against those who had committed violence during recent protests.

12. On 27 October, the Salah ad-Din Provincial Council voted to initiate a process to declare itself an autonomous region. The move, which was made in response to the arrest of alleged members of the former Baath Party in the province and elsewhere in the country, was controversial. The leaders of some political blocs publicly rejected the initiative, while others supported it, saying that the demand was in line with constitutional provisions on the formation of regions. In accordance with the Iraqi constitution, a province can ask for a referendum to form a new region or join an existing region. Such requests have to be approved by the Council of Ministers prior to the arrangement of a vote. The decision taken by the Salah ad-Din Provincial Council led to renewed calls for the formation of regions in other provinces, including Ninawa, Al-Anbar and Diyala.

13. In Kirkuk, parties continued to collaborate after a power-sharing agreement was reached in March 2011 on the distribution of the province's top three posts, including those of the Chairman of the Provincial Council, the Governor and the Deputy Governor, among the Turkmen, Kurdish and Arab communities. However, political tensions between the three main communities in the province remain. On 9 August, the Governor of Kirkuk announced the establishment of an anti-terrorist centre in Kirkuk, and appointed a Turkmen candidate director-general of the centre.

14. On 15 September, the Iraqi Turkmen Front announced the establishment of a 150-strong force to protect the Turkmen community following the recent killing of members of the community. Local Kurdish and Arab community leaders voiced their opposition to the establishment of such a force. Discussions to resolve this matter are under way.

B. Regional developments pertaining to Iraq

15. During the reporting period, bilateral talks between Iraq and Kuwait remained on hold, mainly owing to differences over Kuwait's proposal to build the port of

Mubarak on the island of Bubiyan. The two sides have yet to agree on the date of the second meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee to follow up on the issues discussed during the first meeting, held in Kuwait on 28 and 29 March.

16. On 14 and 15 August, a delegation from the Government of Iraq visited Kuwait to discuss the construction of the port of Mubarak. After the visit, the delegation submitted its report to the Council of Ministers of Iraq, which has yet to take a final position on the matter. Meanwhile, several Iraqi members of parliament issued separate statements calling on the Government to ask Kuwait to stop the project, saying it would harm the economic and navigational interests of Iraq.

17. A number of Iraq's obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations pertaining to Kuwait remain pending. They include the implementation of Security Council resolutions related to the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project and compensation payments to Iraqi private citizens pursuant to Council resolution 899 (1994). During the reporting period, my Special Representative for Iraq, Martin Kobler, held consultations with officials of the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait with a view to making further progress on all these fronts. In addition, my High-level Coordinator for compliance by Iraq with its obligations regarding the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third country nationals or their remains, as well as the return of all Kuwaiti property, including archives seized by Iraq, Gennady Tarasov, continued his efforts aimed at the implementation of his mandate.

18. On 12 September, the Prime Minister of Jordan, Marouf Bakhit, visited the Kurdistan region and officially inaugurated the Jordanian consulate in Erbil.

19. From 30 September to 2 October, Speaker of Parliament Usama al-Nujaifi visited Tehran, where he met with Iranian officials, including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mr. Al-Nujaifi's Iranian counterpart, Ali Larijani, to discuss bilateral cooperation and exchange views on the developments in the region.

20. On 19 October, terrorists from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) operating from Iraqi territory launched an attack in Hakkari province in south-eastern Turkey that resulted in the death of 24 Turkish soldiers. In response, Turkey launched ground and air assaults on PKK targets in northern Iraq. Following the incident, Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani spoke to Turkish President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and condemned the PKK attacks. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Hoshyar Zebari, also discussed the situation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu.

21. On 30 and 31 October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Aliakbar Salehi, visited Baghdad to meet with Iraqi officials and discuss further ways to strengthen bilateral relations in the areas of trade, economy and border security. The importance of stability and security of Iraq for the region was emphasized.

22. On 14 November, in the context of the deliberations of the League of Arab States on the Syrian Arab Republic, Minister for Foreign Affairs Zebari spoke of the need to immediately end the killing, violence and armed clashes in Syrian cities and for genuine national dialogue between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition under the umbrella of the League. Iraq abstained from a vote to suspend the Syrian Arab Republic from the League.

C. International developments

23. In September, President Talabani led the Iraqi delegation to the General Assembly, which he addressed on 24 September. He stated that Iraq was striving to build a democratic State anchored in peace and the rule of law, with communities living in harmony, irrespective of their sectarian, ethnic or factional affiliations. He went on to say that the Iraqi security forces had proved that they were capable of providing security and combating terrorism following the withdrawal of the United States Forces from Iraq at the end of the year. President Talabani further encouraged the international community to seek investment opportunities in Iraq in the fields of oil, natural gas and infrastructure.

III. Activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

A. Political activities

24. On 8 October, my Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Kobler, assumed his duties in Baghdad. Upon his arrival, he began holding consultations with Iraqi officials and leaders on the implementation of the UNAMI mandate. He met with President Talabani, Prime Minister Al-Maliki, Speaker of Parliament Al-Nujaifi, the Deputy Prime Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs Zebari and other Government ministers and leaders of political blocs. Iraqi leaders and officials reiterated their support for UNAMI and the work of my Special Representative.

25. On 22 and 23 October, my Special Representative visited Erbil to meet with officials of the region. During his visit, he met with Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani, Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Minister for the Interior Kerim Sinjari and other officials, who updated him on recent discussions between the officials of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal Government, including pending issues related to the Erbil agreement.

26. During his consultations with key interlocutors, my Special Representative explored the possibility of resuming the work of the standing consultative mechanism, which is a forum that brings together key actors, including representatives of the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqiya bloc, to discuss issues of shared concern. Discussions in the past have focused on holding provincial council elections in Kirkuk, power-sharing in Ninawa, the census and the future of the combined security mechanism.

27. On 29 and 30 October, my Special Representative visited Kirkuk to meet with senior local officials. He met with Governor Najmeldin Karim, Deputy Governor Rakan al-Juburi and Chairperson of the Provincial Council Hasan Turan. The officials briefed the Special Representative on the latest developments relating to the situation in Kirkuk and the key pending issues and challenges that needed to be addressed, including the prospects for holding provincial council elections. In Kirkuk, the Special Representative met with representatives of the Christian community to discuss the challenges they face in the province. On 31 October, he also visited the Al-Basrah governorate to meet with local officials, including the Governor and the Chairman of the Provincial Council.

28. During the reporting period, the UNAMI liaison office in Tehran continued to explore potential areas of cooperation between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Particular focus was given to establishing a facilitating role with the United Nations country teams in both countries to address issues such as sandstorms, the management of marshlands, transboundary water issues and cooperation on demining the border and drug control.

29. On 26 September, together with the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Representatives, and with support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNAMI hosted a round table on the legislative framework for the protection of the rights of ethnic and religious communities and components in Iraq. The round table built on past efforts by UNAMI to enable a diverse group of participants to discuss the development of a long-awaited legislative framework on the protection of the rights of minorities, as stipulated in article 125 of the Constitution.

30. In Kirkuk and other disputed internal territories of Iraq, UNAMI continued to facilitate confidence-building measures. During the reporting period, the Detainee and Missing Persons Committee of the Kirkuk Provincial Council, which includes members of the Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish communities, resumed its work. In August, the Committee met with Kurdish security forces to discuss the issue of detainees. The Committee agreed to focus on revising the list of detainees and missing persons and to submit it to the Kurdish side. In the process, UNAMI facilitated contacts between the parties.

B. Electoral assistance activities

31. On 28 July, the Council of Representatives rejected a no-confidence motion in the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission for alleged financial and administrative irregularities by a vote of 94 of the 245 members present. On 14 August, the Federal Supreme Court declared the earlier removal of one commissioner by the Council of Representatives illegal and ordered his reinstatement.

32. On 7 August, my former Special Representative for Iraq, Ad Melkert, encouraged the Speaker of the Council of Representatives to start the process for the appointment of the next Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission, ahead of the expiration of the term of the current Board in April 2012. On 6 October, the Council of Representatives established a parliamentary nomination committee and UNAMI was invited to attend as an observer.

33. During consultations with the heads of all parliamentary political blocs and nomination committee members, UNAMI expressed its readiness to support the process, while underlining the need for it to be credible and transparent. UNAMI has also encouraged the current Board of Commissioners to prepare for a smooth transition process, including by drafting its final report to the Council of Representatives, properly archiving documents and carrying out a comprehensive inventory of its assets.

34. UNAMI continues to support the Independent High Electoral Commission in maintaining its readiness to implement forthcoming electoral events. The holding of governorate council elections in the three governorates of the Kurdistan region were postponed indefinitely in September 2011 owing to delays in amendments to the relevant electoral laws and the release of the election budget. On 1 November, the

Kurdistan Regional Government adopted amendments to its provincial council elections law according to which the date of the polls will be announced after consultation with the Commission. In that regard, the Commission has established that a 180-day period is required subsequent to the adoption of the legal framework and the transfer of the operational budget. To date, only 10 per cent of the operational budget, estimated at $30 million, has been made available to the Commission.

35. During the reporting period, the United Nations integrated electoral team, comprising UNAMI, UNDP, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), continued to provide capacity-building assistance to the Commission, including by training electoral staff on advanced project management, election logistics and procurement, software development, the preparation of public outreach materials and access to information policies.

C. Technical preparations for the census

36. The holding of a nationwide census in Iraq has been postponed, largely because of the need to resolve related political issues. Attempts by the Government of Iraq to settle these outstanding disagreements through three governorate-level committees in the disputed territories have yet to yield a consensus because of differences over jurisdiction, the issue of the inclusion of ethnicity in the questionnaire and the criteria for data collection.

37. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued its capacity-building programme in support of Iraq's preparations for the nationwide census. An international technical advisory board, co-chaired by the Minister of Planning and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, has endorsed the preparations, plans and tools of the census. The Government of Iraq has allocated $150 million for the census exercise. UNFPA has received $7 million, of which $5.5 million has been spent, to provide support to the initiative through the Iraq Trust Fund.

D. Development and humanitarian assistance

38. In partnership with the Government of Iraq, the United Nations country team continues to implement the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2011-2014. Discussions are ongoing with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government regarding the co-financing of United Nations programmes and activities within the 2012 budget. For the first time, the Government has started allocating funds, amounting to $250 million, from the federal budget for the cost-sharing of projects to be spent in partnership with the international community, including projects with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes active in Iraq.

39. The United Nations country team continues to support the efforts of the Government of Iraq to assess the country's progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This includes capacity development support to the Government for the Iraq Knowledge Network Survey, which will provide the first update since 2007 on several indicators of progress on the Goals and other crucial data on access to essential services, the labour force, food security and governance.

40. Through the inter-agency programme for the modernization of the public sector in Iraq, led by UNDP, service delivery models and costing studies for a number of public sector areas, including health, education and water and sanitation, have been finalized. These activities support the modernization of administrative procedures and management systems and feed into the Government's vision and road map for public sector reform in Iraq, which is to be finalized in the coming months. The UNDP-led public financial management programme continues to assist the Kurdistan Regional Government in strengthening its capacity to implement its budget.

41. On 24 October, in a speech before the Acting Chair of the Iraqi Commission on Integrity, Judge Ala'a Saadi, Prime Minister Al-Maliki reiterated his Government's determination to combat corruption and support the work of the Commission in this regard.

42. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations continues to provide support to reform Iraq's agricultural sector, including support to three governorates in planning and budget execution, as well as technical assistance to farmers through the establishment of an agricultural information centre that could be replicated in other governorates.

43. In October, the World Food Programme (WFP) reached an agreement with the Ministry of Trade on the submission of a budget to provide food rations for 10 million Iraqis and to strengthen the capacity of the public distribution system with regard to supply chain management. WFP is also providing food-related assistance to 550,000 primary school students in vulnerable areas of the country and building the capacity of the Ministry of Education to implement a national school food project to enhance enrolment, attendance and learning in primary schools.

44. In the health sector, the United Nations provided critical support to the Ministry of Health for the procurement of high-quality vaccines and medical supplies worth as much as $1 billion per year. The initiative, led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), will supply the Iraqi health system with medicines and health supplies, significantly improving the quality of health services to the country's 15 million children. With United Nations support, the Ministry of Health and other ministries completed the drafting of the first national nutrition strategy, which aims to ensure proper nutrition for all children in Iraq.

45. The World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education through the "human resources for health" initiative. In order to respond to the challenge posed by the shortage of nurses and midwives, WHO arranged a national consultative meeting, held on 25 and 26 September and from 3 to 5 October, to review the draft national nursing and midwifery strategy.

46. As part of an initiative to reduce the incidence of hospital infections, on 12 October WHO delivered to the Ministry of Heath protective antiseptic clothing for patients and physicians in major hospitals in the country. Also in October, WHO was able to secure approximately $1 million from the Ministry of Health for second-line drugs for tuberculosis patients with multiple-drug resistance.

47. On 22 September, the Government and UNICEF launched the first survey on the state of the environment conducted in Iraq since 2005. The survey highlights the fact that people living in rural areas have significantly less access to water and

sanitation services than people living in urban areas. The survey was published as part of a broader partnership between UNICEF, the Government and the European Union to strengthen the capacity of Iraq in the water and sanitation sectors.

48. To promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, UNAMI and mandated United Nations agencies, funds and programmes will be holding preparatory meetings from 24 to 27 November with the participation of the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, parliament, provincial councils, the Iraqi High Commission for Women, civil society organizations and youth groups. The meetings will culminate in a global open day round-table discussion on 27 November, when achievements and challenges will be presented and the way forward agreed.

49. UNAMI and the United Nations country team are supporting the Government of Iraq in the development of a comprehensive strategy against gender-based violence. UNFPA, WHO, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are jointly implementing a project to support the strengthening of women's rights in Iraq through the development of a national policy framework to combat violence against women, which will include specific monitoring mechanisms.

50. On 26 August, following the national conference on revitalizing the Iraqi marshlands held in Al-Basrah on 6 and 7 June, the United Nations Integrated Water Task Force published a report entitled "Managing change in the marshlands: Iraq's critical challenge". The report emphasizes the need to restore the marshlands as a vital environmental and developmental priority and calls for development of a national vision for the management and governance of the marshlands within the overall integrated management of water resources.

51. UNAMI and humanitarian agencies continue to support Iraq's responses to natural and man-made disasters. Since July, recurrent Turkish air strikes and Iranian shelling against suspected PKK and Party of Free Life of Kurdistan terrorists along the northern border areas in the Kurdistan region of Iraq have reportedly affected local communities, resulting in the displacement of civilians. Approximately 800 families have been displaced, 175 of which have been placed in three temporary camps. United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and national humanitarian organizations have assisted local authorities in the three Governorates in the Kurdistan region to provide food, non-food and shelter items to the affected populations.

52. In close coordination with the Government and in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is providing support to internally displaced persons. From 1 January to 31 August, 26,590 internally displaced and refugee families returned to their place of origin or resettled in another location in Iraq. However, despite steady returns, some 1.2 million Iraqis are still displaced. UNHCR and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) continue to support the Government in finding a durable solution to the problem of displacement through urban planning and land allocation. The recent appointment of a coordinator of the Higher National Committee for Displacement Affairs constitutes an important step, enabling the Government of Iraq to enhance its strategy to address and end displacement in the country. In August, some 5,840 internally displaced families and 2,330 refugee

families were registered with the Government as permanent returnees in their location of return. Multiple obstacles have prevented thousands of displaced persons from registering, thus limiting their access to services and compensation and the enjoyment of their rights.

53. The Syrian Arab Republic continues to host the largest number of Iraqi refugees, of which 112,331 have been registered by UNHCR. My Deputy Special Representative, Christine McNab, who is also the Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator, is monitoring the situation to ensure the readiness of the United Nations to respond to any population movements across the Syrian border. The work of the Deputy Special Representative is being carried out within the framework of the humanitarian country team, with UNHCR as the lead agency and together with counterparts in the region.

E. Human rights activities

54. On 8 August 2011, UNAMI and OHCHR released a report on the human rights situation in Iraq for 2010. In the report, a range of human rights issues are examined, including the impact of the ongoing violence targeted at civilians, detention, the rule of law and the protection of the rights of specific groups. The state of political rights in the country, including freedom of assembly and expression, were also covered in the report. While there has been improvement in some areas, it was found that many challenges remain and that overall the human rights situation in the country remains fragile.

55. During the reporting period, targeted attacks against civilians, government officials and security personnel continued. By some estimates, more than 10 Iraqis were killed or injured, on average, each day. On 15 July, two car bombs reportedly killed at least 8 people and injured at least 35 more in Karbala. On 25 September, attacks against government buildings in Karbala governorate resulted in the death of dozens of civilians and the injury of many others.

56. Attacks continued to be perpetrated against civilians because of their religious and ethnic affiliations, and against minorities. On 16 July, a bomb in Hindiya reportedly killed 6 Shiite pilgrims and injured 31. On 2 August, a car bomb exploded in front of a Catholic church in Kirkuk, injuring a priest and 19 others. Two other car bombs were found in front of an evangelical Presbyterian church and an Assyrian church. On 12 September, unknown gunmen stopped a bus of Shiite pilgrims in Al-Anbar governorate and killed all 22 men aboard. A number of murders of individuals from various religious and ethnic minorities have been reported in Ninawa, Kirkuk and Baghdad.

57. Children were among the victims of the violence. On 25 July, in Kirkuk governorate, a car bomb killed seven people, including two children aged 10 and 11, and injured seven other children. On 30 July, in Salah ad-Din governorate, three children were killed in an exchange of fire between Iraqi security forces and insurgents. On 15 August, a car bomb in a market in Al-Kut killed more than 60 people, including 16 children. There were reports of the abduction of children by unidentified armed groups for a range of political, criminal and sectarian motives.

58. There was a marked increase in assassinations of government officials, professionals and security personnel. On 30 September, the Directors-General of the

Ministries of Health, Finance and the Interior were targeted. The Director-General of the Ministry of Finance survived, while the other two were killed.

59. UNAMI continued to monitor conditions in detention facilities in Iraq, which are characterized by overcrowding, poor hygiene, a lack of rehabilitation programmes for detainees and poor security. On 19 September, the Ministry of Justice reported that a fire had broken out in a prison in Baladiyat in eastern Baghdad, killing 9 detainees and injuring 14 others. During a monitoring visit, Hilla Central Prison in Babil governorate was found to have 1,300 detainees, well beyond its official capacity of 300. On 2 August, a delegation from the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Representatives was denied access to the prison to investigate reports of human rights violations on the grounds that the Committee had failed to gain prior authorization from the Ministry of Justice. On 6 August, a riot broke out at the prison, during which at least eight prisoners escaped and during which at least three policemen and three detainees were killed and eight were wounded. There continue to be reports of children being held with adults in some detention facilities and of children being detained for their alleged involvement in armed insurgent groups, particularly around Al-Ma'sil.

60. On 22 August, it was reported that 40 death sentences had been confirmed, mostly against prisoners convicted of terrorism-related crimes. Since 2004, Iraq has sentenced over 1,180 people to death and has executed over 260. Over 800 people are awaiting confirmation of their death sentences by the Court of Cassation or have had their sentences confirmed by the Presidency Council and are awaiting execution.

61. On 15 July, Minister for Justice Hassan al-Shummari announced the handing over of Camp Cropper by the United States Forces in Iraq to the Ministry of Justice, along with 196 detainees. The facility has been renamed Kerkh Prison.

62. The fact that women suffer domestic and other forms of violence remains of concern, especially since there have been reports of a number of honour killings in various parts of the country. An important achievement in combating violence against women was the enactment by the Kurdistan Regional Government, in September, of the Family Protection Law, which aims to hold the perpetrators of honour crimes accountable and to protect victims in the region.

63. In partnership with UNDP, UNAMI continued to provide technical support for the establishment of the long-awaited Independent High Commission for Human Rights. With the support of the United Nations, the Committee of Experts appointed by the Council of Representatives to select the commissioners started shortlisting candidates. UNAMI and UNDP organized a workshop for the Committee of Experts, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 7 to 9 September, at which representatives of several human rights commissions, including those of Malaysia and South Africa, discussed the process of selecting commissioners in accordance with internationally accepted standards and practices.

64. A national consultation conference facilitated by UNAMI and UNOPS was held in June 2011. The Government of Iraq is finalizing a national action plan on human rights. Through the proposed action plan, the Government aims to implement the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council in the framework of the universal periodic review of Iraq conducted in February 2010. In the Kurdistan region, UNAMI provided technical assistance and support for a regional

consultation conference, held on 24 and 25 July, involving Government and civil society representatives aimed at establishing a regional action plan on human rights.

65. During the reporting period, a number of peaceful demonstrations were held throughout the country. UNAMI received allegations of violence and intimidation by security forces against activists and journalists, including instances involving plain-clothed security forces and ambulances transporting arrested persons. For instance, it was reported that a photojournalist had been abducted by plain-clothed security personnel from a demonstration held in Baghdad's Tahrir square on 22 July. The photojournalist claimed that he had been taken to a riverside location, where he was subjected to a mock execution, and then further abused at another location. A prominent journalist, Hadi Mehdi, was found dead in Baghdad on 8 September, one day before the holding of demonstrations he had helped organize.

66. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq reiterated its commitment to closing Camp Ashraf by 31 December 2011. UNAMI has called on the Government to abide by its obligations under international human rights law, in particular by protecting camp residents from the use of force, forcible deportation, expulsion or forced repatriation, in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement. In addition, the United Nations continues to advocate that the humanitarian needs of the residents be met. In this context, over the past year a team led by UNAMI and comprising representatives from UNHCR and OHCHR has been conducting weekly visits to the camp to monitor the human rights and humanitarian situation.

67. UNAMI and UNHCR are working to find a peaceful and durable solution that respects Iraqi sovereignty and international law. The United Nations has requested the Government of Iraq to give UNHCR the time and neutral space needed to interview and register the residents of the camp individually — an indispensable first step towards their resettlement. My Special Representative has been engaging the National Security Adviser of Iraq, Faleh al-Fayad, in this regard. On 15 and 17 November, a working group consisting of representatives of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq met in Baghdad to develop an operational plan to interview and register the residents. Approval by the Government of Iraq would be vital in moving this process forward. The support of the leadership of Camp Ashraf for United Nations efforts in this regard is also necessary.

68. In order to find a durable solution, it is essential that third countries indicate a willingness to receive camp residents for resettlement. My Special Representative, other senior United Nations officials and I personally have been encouraging Member States in this regard. In addition, my Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, met with Jean De Ruyt, the adviser on Camp Ashraf to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. Furthermore, UNAMI has been assisting the consular staff of several embassies to visit the camp and verify the claims of a small number of residents that they have documents showing their affiliation to certain third countries.

F. Security, operational and logistical issues

69. During the reporting period there was an overall decline in security incidents in the country, in part because of a decrease in attacks on installations and convoys of the United States Forces in Iraq and in part because of the weak reporting

capability of the host Government's security forces. As the scheduled drawdown of the United States Forces continues, the Iraqi security forces are being deployed throughout the country in an attempt to control areas previously monitored by the United States Forces. However, given their limited air and ground assets, they face challenges in securing all areas of the country. Between 500 and 700 security incidents occur each month and armed opposition groups are increasingly targeting Iraqi security forces and government employees.

70. Armed opposition groups maintain the capability to launch coordinated and complex attacks. On 15 August, during the holy month of Ramadan, a series of bombings killed dozens of people and wounded many others across the country. In more than a dozen cities, 37 allegedly coordinated attacks occurred, using car bombs, improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers. The attackers deliberately targeted security forces and locations where civilians congregated, including places of worship.

71. Given the progressive discontinuation of support by the United States Forces to static and mobile security units since July, the United Nations in Iraq is operating in a significantly different security environment, becoming more self-reliant and gradually depending upon the host country for security support. UNAMI has continued to develop its logistic support capabilities to ensure self-reliance.

72. UNAMI and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) are currently conducting integrated flight operations in Iraq. However, the UNHAS operation in Iraq is currently funded only until May 2012, which means that the continuation of UNHAS flights will depend on the availability of additional funding.

73. For reasons of synergy and efficiency, steps have been taken to place UNAMI and UNAMA offices in Kuwait in the same location. According to the recommendations of a team of experts from United Nations Headquarters, a process to integrate the existing support arrangements for the two missions has been initiated, including with regard to finance, human resources, information and communications technology and training, for which there could be integration, streamlining and relocation possibilities.

74. During the reporting period, UNAMI established a Police Advisory Unit. A Senior Police Adviser was recruited to coordinate the Unit, which is composed of four police advisers seconded from Member States. The advisers have been posted to hubs inside Iraq, including in Baghdad and Erbil. In October, the advisers established liaison channels with the Iraqi police force and the Ministry of the Interior, thereby providing UNAMI with enhanced information and advisory capacity on security and policing matters.

IV. Observations

75. The planned withdrawal of United States military forces from Iraq by the end of the year marks a historic turning point and marks another important milestone in Iraq's progress. The people of Iraq should be proud of the achievements they have made over the past eight years in building their young democracy. This includes the drafting of a Constitution and the holding of two national elections and provincial elections. While not underestimating the major challenges that still lie ahead, I am confident that with the support of the United Nations and the wider international

community, Iraq will achieve its full potential. The United Nations will continue to support Iraq, on the basis of the UNAMI mandate, in the areas of political facilitation, electoral assistance, human rights and reconstruction and development.

76. Since my last report, Iraqi political leaders have continued to discuss the implementation of power-sharing agreements reached in Erbil over a year ago that led to the formation of the current Government. While considerable efforts were made at the time to form a national partnership Government, a number of issues remain, particularly with regard to who will head the country's main security ministries. I urge the political leaders of Iraq to redouble their efforts and come to an understanding on implementing their past agreements so that the country can move forward and focus on addressing other pressing challenges.

77. The decision by the Salah ad-Din Provincial Council to initiate the process to declare itself an autonomous region, followed by similar calls in several other governorates, as well as the flag raising incident in Khanaqin, underscore the need for greater understanding and cooperation between the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the provincial councils. It is in the interest of all concerned to work together to make the Iraqi federal model, as enshrined in the Constitution, function. In particular, I would urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to focus greater attention on resolving outstanding issues between them, particularly with respect to the pending oil and gas law and the disputed territories.

78. In this context, UNAMI will continue its efforts to promote political dialogue, primarily through the standing consultative mechanism. UNAMI intends to step up its efforts to help Iraqi leaders find practical ways to cooperate and resolve long-standing issues in the disputed internal territories, including the status of Kirkuk. In this regard, I am encouraged that all communities in Kirkuk have indicated that they would like to have the provincial council elections, not held since 2009, conducted as soon as possible. UNAMI will continue its efforts to facilitate discussions in reaching an agreement on the way forward in this regard.

79. In the light of the planned departure of United States military forces from Iraq, I would urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to define the future of the combined security mechanism in the disputed internal territories. This mechanism has served as an important confidence-building measure and is credited for helping to bring greater stability to northern Iraq. UNAMI is prepared to assist in any future mechanism that is agreed upon, if requested by the parties concerned.

80. I welcome the timely start of the process to appoint a new Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq to ensure a smooth transition once the tenure of the current Board expires in May 2012. I strongly encourage transparency in the selection process of the new Commissioners and reiterate the readiness of the United Nations to extend technical advice and support, if requested, in this regard. I also reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to continue its support and capacity-building assistance to the Commission so that it can continue to conduct electoral events in Iraq.

81. While much attention is being paid to addressing the country's political challenges, it should not be forgotten that the people of Iraq also expect elected leaders to address their socio-economic needs. As echoed in other countries across

the Arab world, Iraqi citizens are looking for improvements in the delivery of essential services, job creation and greater transparency. UNAMI, together with the rest of the United Nations family in Iraq, will continue to assist the Government of Iraq in meeting those needs.

82. I welcome the fact that the Government has started allocating funds from its federal budget for development projects in a cost-sharing partnership with the international community. Through this partnership, the United Nations country team will continue to implement projects that reflect the priorities of the Government in accordance with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the national development plan (2010-2014). I also welcome Prime Minister Al-Maliki's recent statement reiterating his Government's determination to combat corruption and his support for the work of the Iraqi Commission on Integrity. Progress in this regard would not only strengthen the Iraqi people's confidence in their elected representatives, it would also help ensure that this problem does not hinder the country's reconstruction and development efforts.

83. I remain concerned by reports of continued human rights violations in Iraq, particularly the pattern of violence that has been taking a toll on the lives of Iraqi civilians. Considerable challenges, therefore, need to be addressed to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are protected. In this context, it is of vital importance that the Independent High Commission for Human Rights finally be established. I also encourage the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to finalize, at the earliest opportunity, their respective national and regional action plans on human rights, incorporating the recommendations put forward by Iraqi civil society groups.

84. I call upon the Government to fully investigate all allegations of human rights violations, including the killing and intimidation of journalists, to hold accountable any person found to have committed human rights violations and to do its utmost to ensure the full protection and respect for the peaceful exercise of the rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of opinion and freedom of information of all Iraq's citizens.

85. I am further concerned about the continued implementation of the death penalty in Iraq. I call upon the authorities to establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/149.

86. The situation in Camp Ashraf remains worrisome and there is an urgent need to find a peaceful and durable solution, given the short time remaining before the Government of Iraq's announced closure of the camp by 31 December 2011. I welcome the assurances given to me by the Government of Iraq that when closing the camp it will not use force and it will adhere to its humanitarian obligations under international law. The United Nations is committed to doing its utmost to help address this humanitarian issue in a way that fully respects Iraqi sovereignty and international law and that is acceptable to all concerned.

87. This is a complex and sensitive matter and while the United Nations will play the role of facilitator, it requires the full cooperation and support of all sides. The Government of Iraq bears primary responsibility for the welfare and safety of the residents of Camp Ashraf and is a key partner in efforts to find a peaceful solution. The leadership of the camp residents must also show flexibility and work in a cooperative manner towards a durable solution.

88. In this context, I appeal to the Government of Iraq to give UNHCR the time and neutral space it needs to interview and register the camp residents for resettlement. In order for this process to move forward, the leadership of the camp must also be supportive and allow the residents to participate in this verification process and freely say where they wish to be resettled.

89. It is my sincere hope that the working group consisting of representatives of the Government of Iraq and the United Nations that was established for this purpose will work out the details of the operational plan for interviewing the residents of the camp. I am also hopeful that the Government of Iraq will be willing to show some flexibility on the timing of the closure of the camp if tangible progress is made in the relocation of the residents outside Iraq before the end of the year.

90. The success of the UNHCR process will depend on the strong support of the international community and, in particular, on the willingness of third countries to receive camp residents deemed eligible for resettlement, including countries that have nationals and other affiliated persons in the camp. I therefore appeal to Member States for their support in this regard. Making progress early on would go a long way in giving the Iraqi authorities greater confidence in the process and create positive momentum towards a resolution.

91. On the regional front, I once again condemn the continuing terrorist attacks by the PKK and the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan against Iraq's neighbours, particularly Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is clearly unacceptable for the territory of Iraq to be used by these groups to launch cross-border attacks. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and its neighbours must be respected. I therefore urge Iraq and the affected countries to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to this challenge. I also call on all parties to ensure the utmost respect of humanitarian principles to protect civilians living along the border areas.

92. It has been almost a year since the Security Council took the historic step of lifting most of Iraq's obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, a move aimed at helping Iraq normalize its international status pursuant to Council resolution 1859 (2008). I remain committed to seeing this goal achieved. However, this will not be possible unless Iraq fully implements its outstanding obligations pertaining to Kuwait, namely the repatriation of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains, the return of Kuwaiti property, including national archives, as well as the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project and compensation payments to Iraqi private citizens pursuant to Council resolution 899 (1994). In addition, Iraq's reaffirmation of the land and sea borders on the basis of Council resolution 833 (1993) would serve as an important confidence-building measure.

93. I am encouraged that the leaderships of both nations have expressed a strong desire to make concrete progress on bilateral relations following the exchange of high-level visits by representatives of the two countries early this year. I therefore would like to urge the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait to resume their bilateral dialogue under the Joint Ministerial Committee that they established in January 2011 to address outstanding concerns and work towards finding mutually acceptable solutions.

94. As I stated in my report pursuant to resolution 1859 (2008), submitted to the Security Council over two years ago, the road map for the normalization of relations

between the two countries is clear (see S/2009/385). UNAMI, through my Special Representative for Iraq, my High-level Coordinator and me personally, stands ready to do whatever is necessary to expedite this process on the basis of Iraq's full implementation of its remaining obligations under Chapter VII.

95. In view of the planned withdrawal of the United States Forces in Iraq, I would like to thank the Government of the United States for having provided invaluable security and logistical support to the United Nations over the years. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Government of Iraq and its security forces for providing security for United Nations premises and personnel as the United States military continues its drawdown. I also thank the Government of Iraq for allocating an additional compound for use by the United Nations in Baghdad, which has allowed UNAMI and the United Nations country team to continue to strengthen its presence in Baghdad.

96. I would like to express my sincere thanks to my former Special Representative, Mr. Melkert, who over the past two years has helped shape United Nations efforts to assist the people and Government of Iraq. I also wish my new Special Representative, Mr. Kobler, who assumed his duties in Iraq in October, success in fulfilling his mandate. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the women and men serving the United Nations in Iraq for their continued dedication and commitment.